



### Life Course

Childhood Risk Factor

### Brief Name

ACE: Jailed Parent or Guardian

### Indicator

Percent of children whose parent or guardian was jailed.

### Description

This is a proxy measure for toxic stress and is included as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). This question asks parents, *"Did [child's name] ever live with a parent or guardian who served time in jail or prison after [he/she] was born?"*

WI	US	Best	Worst
6.6%	6.9%	3.2%	13.2%
		NJ	KY

### Year

2011/2012

### Numerator

Number of children who experienced the ACE

### Denominator

Children aged 0-17

### Importance

The number of children whose parents are in state or federal prisons has been steadily increasing across the US since the 1980s (Glaze, 2008). There is a well-documented link between parent criminality and youth behavioral and social problems, specifically conduct disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (Phillips, 2002). Research suggests that these outcomes are in response to stresses related to single-parenthood, or absence of a consistent second parent; economic disadvantage; or family conflict and instability (Amato, 1991). Additionally, having a parent removed from the home places children at risk of experiencing a severed parent-child bond, which may have profound implications for the child's social and emotional development. (Bowlby, 2012; Hess, 1991).

### Limitations

The National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) is completed by the parent or caregiver, who may be unwilling to disclose a history of incarceration.

This metric does not include incarceration of a non-custodial parent.

### Source

NSCH 2011/12. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved from [www.childhealthdata.org](http://www.childhealthdata.org). Glaze, Lauren E., and Laura M. Maruschak. Parents in prison and their minor children. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2008. Phillips, Susan D., et al. "Parental incarceration among adolescents receiving mental health services." *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 11.4 (2002): 385-399. Amato, Paul R., and Bruce Keith. "Parental divorce and the wellbeing of children: a meta-analysis." *Psychological Bulletin*, 110.1 (1991): 26. Bowlby, John. *The making and breaking of affectional bonds*. Routledge (2012). Hess, Peg M., and Gail Folaron. "Ambivalences: A challenge to permanency for children." *Child Welfare: Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program* (1991).